

*Administration of Barack H. Obama, 2009*

**Statement on the Observance of Juneteenth**  
*June 19, 2009*

On this day in 1865, more than 2 years after President Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, those who found themselves still enslaved in Galveston, Texas had their hopes realized and their prayers answered. Contrary to what others had told them, the rumors they had heard were indeed true: The Civil War had ended, and they were now free.

General Gordon Granger issued the call with "General Order No. 3" saying, "The people of Texas are informed that, in accordance with a proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free." June 19, or Juneteenth, is now observed in 31 States. Nearly a century and a half later, the descendants of slaves and slave owners can commemorate the day together and celebrate the rights and freedoms we all share in this great Nation that we all love.

This moment also serves as a time for reflection and appreciation, and an opportunity for many people to trace their family's lineage. African Americans helped to build our Nation brick by brick and have contributed to her growth in every way, even when rights and liberties were denied to them. In light of the historic unanimous vote in the United States Senate this week supporting the call for an apology for slavery and segregation, the occasion carries even more significance.

*Categories:* Statements by the President : Juneteenth.

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